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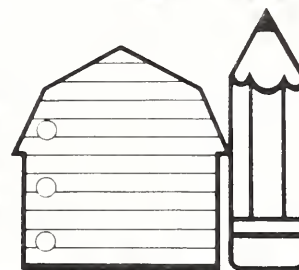
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Ag in the Classroom

Notes

United States
Department of
Agriculture



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A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 234-W, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. 202/447-5727

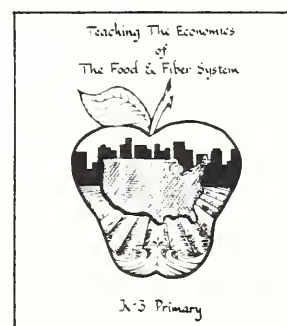
New Guide Covers Economics and Agriculture

If you walked into a classroom and saw students canning tomatoes, you might think you've stumbled into a home economics class. Think again. What you have just observed is a history class learning about food preservation through a lesson from a new teacher's guide, "Teaching the Economics of the Food and Fiber System."

The guide, released by the Joint Council on

Economic Education, was introduced at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference, June 7-9, Washington, D.C. For use by teachers, the guide was produced through the combined efforts of the Illinois Council on Economic Education, Northern Illinois University, and the Arkansas State Council on Economic Education, University of

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A Principal's Views on Ag in the Classroom

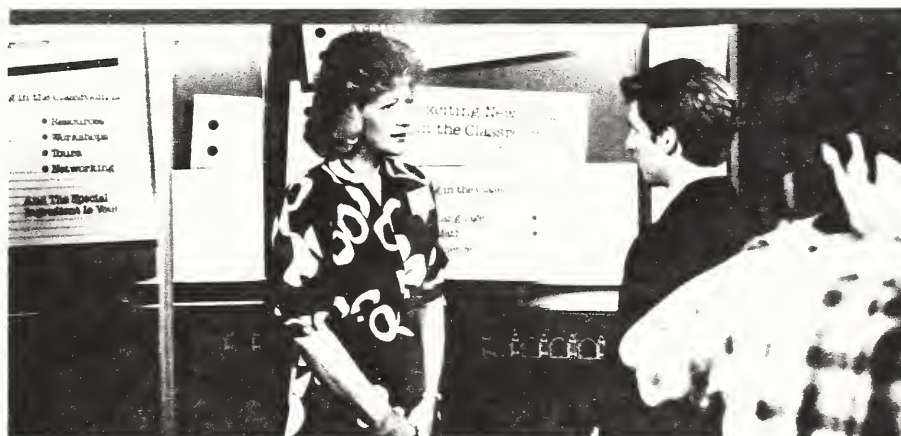
Jeanette Bennett is a salesman who believes in her own product. Jeanette Bennett "sells" agriculture.

At the Sharing Roundtables session at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference, the elementary school principal from Parkin, Arkansas, discussed how she promotes agriculture in her own school, and suggested ways to get teachers excited about agriculture.

"Your teacher is your consumer," Bennett explained. "You have to sell your story. Ask yourself, 'what will the teacher buy, and what will the teacher use, and how do we get agriculture across?'"

As a former teacher, Bennett knows time does not allow agriculture to be taught as a separate subject, but believes it can be integrated into the existing curriculum in many interesting and attention-getting ways. Bennett believes in using agriculture as a motivator to make students think and want to learn. That's a big selling point for teachers.

The availability of good resources make Bennett's selling job easier. Among others, she endorses the Joint Council for Economic Education's new teacher's guide, "Teaching the



Economics of the Food and Fiber System." Bennett believes economics is basic to food, shelter and clothing, and, in that way, runs parallel to agriculture.

She cites a game from the guide called "The Web of Interdependence," in which a child, chosen to be the farmer, has a ball of twine. The farmer tosses the twine to a child, who must then choose a vocation, and explain how that vocation relates to agriculture. The child, in turn, throws the twine back to the farmer, who tosses it on to someone else, and the process repeats itself. "What this demonstrates to children, and teachers, too," says Bennett, "is the 'web of interdependence' of agriculture and economics."

At the National Conference, Arkansas elementary school principal Jeannette Bennet discusses the new guide, "Teaching the Economics of the Food and Fiber System," with a public television reporter.

From the Director

Dear Readers:

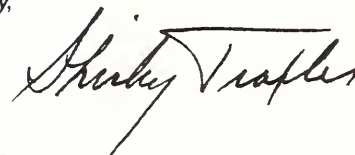
With summer well under way, some folks are off to the mountains or the beach. Whatever your destination, it's a great season to observe agriculture. I hope you will take some time to appreciate the crops growing in the fields and animals grazing in pastures along the way. If you're a farmer, you might want to post signs identifying your crops to make the traveler's journey more interesting.

There are other activities attracting a lot of interest this summer—Ag in the Classroom teacher training workshops and summer agri-

cultural institutes. If you are a teacher and haven't heard about such programs, get in touch with the person from your state, who is listed on the back of this newsletter, to see if any sessions are being offered near you. It's too late for this year, maybe you can get a head start for 1988.

Have a safe and happy summer!

Sincerely,



Shirley Traxler

New Guide

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Arkansas. The guide is based on a framework developed in 1983 by a group of educators, economists and United States Department of Agriculture Representatives. The guide is divided into three parts: K-3rd grades, 4-6th grades and 7-12th grades.

According to Dr. John Lewis, president of the Illinois Council on Economic Education, "Materials are based upon the abilities of the students. Concentration at the high school level is on applying knowledge to agriculturally related public policy issues." "Materials are designed to be integrated into the regular curriculum," explained

Dr. Phillip Benson, associate director at the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education at the University of Arkansas. Teachers can find activities, games and lessons directly from the guide.

Benson coordinated development of the K-6 curriculum when he became the Arkansas contact for Ag in the Classroom. In 1984, a team of eight economics teachers wrote 180 lessons based on 10 themes, which were field-tested, revised and illustrated. "Originally, only 10 lessons were to be tested on students," said Benson, "but the kids liked them so well, the teachers just kept on going."

"Teaching the Economics of the Food and Fiber System" is available through the Joint Council on Economic Education.



Fifth grade teacher Wendy Craft shares her creative ideas at the National Conference.

Teacher, Students Discover Exciting World Beyond City Limits

A third-generation urbanite who used to think all string beans grew to exactly one inch (as they appear in cans), Wendy Craft now knows many farmers, and exotic vegetables, on a first-name basis. And so do her lucky students.

Wendy Craft, a fifth-grade teacher from Los Angeles, and graduate of the California Summer Ag Institute, shared her new-found interest in teaching about agriculture at the National Conference. "When I was growing up, I never even had a garden. Dick and Jane used to go to the farm every year, and that was it."

Things have changed for Craft. Now, she takes her students to farms, brings a dehydrator to class and instinctively stops her car to take pictures of California's diverse roadside crops. She shares these pictures, and everything she learns about agriculture, with her students. "If a child asks me a question about agriculture and I don't have the answer, I'm proud to say, 'I don't know, let's find out.'"

"Agriculture is a worthwhile subject," she told the audience, "so don't give up on educators who don't

want to teach about it."

Craft is determined to expose her students to as much agriculture as possible. "I try to find out how many local ag operations are willing to let students visit. For city children, it's often a once-in-a-lifetime experience," she said. "I have learned that farmers are people who care. Teachers and farmers have to become partners."

This past school year, Craft has discovered many creative ways to teach about agriculture, and has undoubtedly inspired other teachers with her long list of ideas. "Agriculture can be worked into almost any subject—like art projects, letter-writing, and language. On Arbor Day, for instance, I have my students plant fruit trees. If I want to reward students, I give them agriculture posters."

For a recent class production, Craft had her students dress up like raisins, sing "I Heard It through the Grapevine," and distribute recipes and raisins to the audience. "The next morning," she said, "I had three messages from parents wanting extra copies of the recipes." Craft said it was easy to outfit the students. "Brown trash bags make terrific raisin costumes."

Craft has a basic philosophy for teaching about agriculture. "Children want something simple, fun and different. They want something they can relate to, and that's what I give them."

Spotlight

Hitting a High Note

The fourth graders of Machen Elementary School in Hampton, Virginia, have a lot to sing about.

Their talented teacher, Chris Bartlett, has written a memorable repertoire of original songs for the students to sing and perform. Due to her unique way of teaching, grades are up, absenteeism is down, and everybody is having a lot of fun learning about agriculture.

Bartlett and her class were in Washington, D.C., on June 9th to perform for the National Ag in the Classroom Conference. The children sang about farming, pollution, insects, trees and even photosynthesis, to the delight of the 130 participants and guests.

"It's been extremely effective," Bartlett said of her method of combining classroom lessons with music and dance. Her catchy, attention-grabbing songs are full of facts that students retain well beyond the day of the test.

Bartlett began integrating agriculture lessons into her curriculum in 1985, when the Social Studies coordinator for the Hampton City Schools gave her an Ag in the Classroom teacher's guide and workbooks as part of a pilot program. "The children really did enjoy the unit," she reported.

Bartlett grew up on her grandparents' farm in Mississippi. She went to live in the city as a freshman in high school, but never lost her love for the farm. "Agriculture is very close to me," she told the conference.

A graduate of Northeastern Louisiana University, Bartlett has taught elementary school in the United States, Turkey and Germany. It was in Turkey, where she taught children of American military and embassy personnel, that Bartlett began to use music to reach students. Now, sixty compositions later, Bartlett is still using music to teach kids. She stresses that a musical approach to learning doesn't work with all classes, but that most of the time, student response is positive.

Music isn't the only vehicle for teaching agriculture, according to Bartlett. "Most teachers don't realize it, but they're teaching agriculture through their science, geography and history classes." She cites the example of Virginia, where state history is taught in the fourth grade. One lesson is about the early settlers and their tobacco crops. "It's a built-in lesson in agriculture," she said.

Bartlett's enthusiasm about agriculture is infectious. Before this year, many children in fourth grade had never seen a farm. When the time came to plan the class field trip, Bartlett offered her students a choice: a National Aeronautics and

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Machen Elementary School students give a shining performance for conference attendees.

They're a Must for Us (The Farming Song)

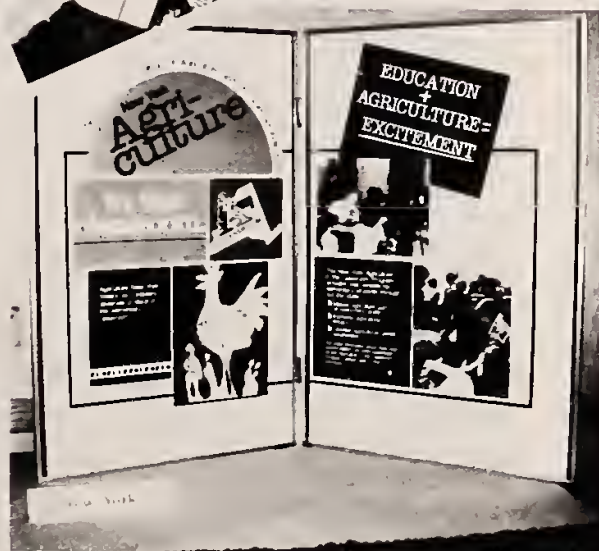
By Chris Bartlett

Peaches, corn, apples, and meat,
Where do we get the food we eat?
Where in the world does it come from?
It comes from down on the farm.
Farmers touch our lives each day,
In everything—in every way.
They're a must, for us!
Without the farmer there wouldn't be
Hamburgers, vanilla ice cream.
Pizza topped with pepperoni,
And peanuts in my chocolate candy,
There's something for you and something for me.
Without the farmer, there wouldn't be.
They're a must ... for us!!

How many people would not eat
If one farmer we delete?
A hundred or more, would you believe?
But, that's how many one can feed.
They also give us clothes we need.
They're important, yes indeed!
They're a must ... For us!!
F A R M I N G, Farming is an industry.
F A R M I N G, Without farming where would
We be?
There are little farms and big ones too,
But, what effect do they have on you?
They affect everything you do!



(Above) Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng discusses Ag in the Classroom program with Karen Spooner, Belle Glade, FL. (Right) Displays of state resources show the variety of approaches educators take to teach about agriculture.

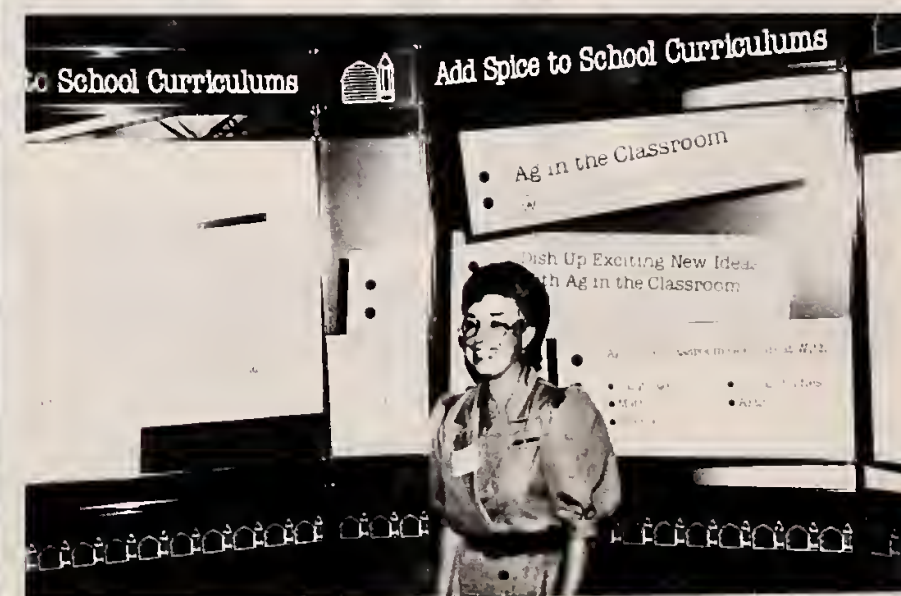


(Top, Left) Conference attendees get acquainted at reception. (Top, Center) Ag in the Classroom's "youngest volunteer." (Below) Fourth grade students from Hampton, Virginia celebrate after a successful singing performance.

National Conference, A Harvest of Ideas!



(Left) Dr. Phillip Benson, Associate Director of the Bessie B. Moore Center for Economic Education, University of Arkansas, Secretary of Agriculture Richard E. Lyng and Arkansas elementary school principal Jeanette Bennett. (Below, Left) Deputy Assistant Secretary Robert Long, Dr. Orville Bentley, Assistant Secretary of Science and Education and former Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz. (Below) Ohio state contact Judy Roush.



Space Administration (NASA) facility, or a local farm. Bartlett's fourth graders chose the farm.

Bartlett's students have excelled, winning awards in physical fitness, art, and writing. Bartlett herself has won numerous awards and award nominations for her music and activities, including

a nomination for the Epperson-Hearst National PTA Award.

This year, Bartlett's class has performed at the Virginia AITC convention in Williamsburg, Rappahannock College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and of course, in Washington, D.C. "It was the highlight of my teaching career," Bartlett said of her trip to the nation's capitol. "It's been a fantastic year!"

Meet the Class of 2000

Demographics, the statistical picture of a population according to such classifications as age, sex and income, was on the minds of educators at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference last month.

With a provocative mixture of humor and serious advice, Dr. Harold L. Hodgkinson, senior fellow of the American Council on Education, revealed many interesting facts about our nation's present and future educational needs during his talk, "Who's Coming through the School System."

Hodgkinson said, is that it has a predictive potential that no economist can match. We can make some striking predictions on who is going to school, who will be consuming agricultural products, what students will need to learn and so forth."

Hodgkinson then profiled the members of the class of 2000 for the audience. He raised points of concern with some of his statistics, commenting that "one third of the youth in our country will never reach their potential because they were born 'at risk' due to social factors."

"We cannot afford to have one third of our young people fail," he warned.

His advice: educators must carefully scan the environment and manage the issues. Universities need to be made useful to upcoming groups. Primary and secondary schools should prepare children in the risk categories for college. "Kindergartens eventually affect graduate school," he stated. "It's all part of a single system."

In that vein, Hodgkinson theorized, "Higher education will start paying attention to public schools. Can you imagine a business that ignores its suppliers?" He said many states are now looking at demographics, and they're starting to make some strategic decisions. For instance, more money will be going into Head Start, and states will develop stronger initiatives to get students to finish high school.

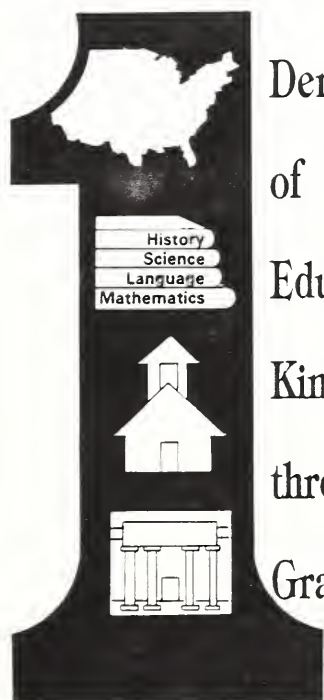
Hodgkinson offered teachers other demographic-related advice. He said the "Norman Rockwell family," with a working husband, housewife mother and two school-age children, is found in only four percent of American households. "When we think about what we teach in school about the family, we've got to make people feel good about the real families that are out there."

"The PTA," he noted, "has gone from six million to nine million members because they have systematically sought out the divorced parent and the single parent—the person who wants to be the best parent they could possibly be." Teachers need to be equally market-oriented.

Hodgkinson recommends this marketing approach for agriculture as well. "We should keep an eye on the organizations we work through. It's remarkable to see how 4-H especially is beginning to realize the necessity of marketing itself. For years, I think people in agriculture have hidden their light under a bushel. I think in this particular period, agriculture is going to have to be more up front."

Regarding the validity of his predictions about the class of 2000, Hodgkinson said, "This is the future. These people have already been born."

All One System



Demographics
of
Education,
Kindergarten
through
Graduate School

by Harold L. Hodgkinson



THE INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP, INC.

Demographics has long been embraced by marketing and advertising professionals interested in pinpointing the potential consumers of their products. But only recently has the science been applied to educational policy and planning.

"The reason demographics is so interesting,"

"The laser video disk. If your students spread peanut butter on it, or throw the thing across the room like a frisbee, it will still work," said Frank Withrow, director of technology, the Young Astronauts Council. He had the room of National Ag In the Classroom Conference attendees captivated.

Showing his audience a laser video disk, Withrow explained that it is part of a soon-to-be released product called Digital Video Interactive Technology (DVI). This new learning tool is a sophisticated offshoot of today's audio/visual Compact Disk (CD) equipment. Withrow's videotape presentation summarized the concept of DVI. "Digital Video Interactive Technology combines the

interactivity of computers, the realism of full motion video, the flexibility of computer-generated video and the high quality of audio in an all digital format."

The advantage of the new laser disk is not only its sturdiness, but also its massive storage capabilities. This "silver platter," which resembles today's 12" video disk, will store up to 54,000 separate picture frames.

Withrow further explained the new advancement. "Today's compact disks have a read-only memory. This means CD's can store up to 1,500 regular floppy disks in a print-only display. With DVI, your computer monitor will do more than store information. It will store pictures, images and sounds. The major difference between DVI and standard video disks is that the user can interact with the data. For instance, he or she can search for specific information, freeze one single frame for hours and days, split screens, or participate in a problem solving program."

According to Withrow, DVI and similar products should hit the consumer market by the early 90's. The technology is still in the developmental stages, and consumers should expect variations on the idea. For instance, CDI (Compact Disk Interactive) will not require a computer hook-up, but will be designed to connect directly to television sets.

"DVI's implications for agriculture studies are endless," Withrow said. "The beauty of this technology is that the learner controls everything. He or she can discover and explore information in new, exciting ways."

On the Horizon

Interesting predictions made at the National Ag in the Classroom Conference:

- **Ag in the Solar System**—By the year 2,000, a Mars space probe will bring back 11 pounds of soil. The hope is that the soil can be treated properly to grow food, which could eventually permit a human settlement on Mars.
- **Distant Learning Via Satellite**—Already becoming popular in some states, satellite tie-in programs are designed for rural areas which lack full curriculums. Tie-ins can also be used to enhance any learning environment.

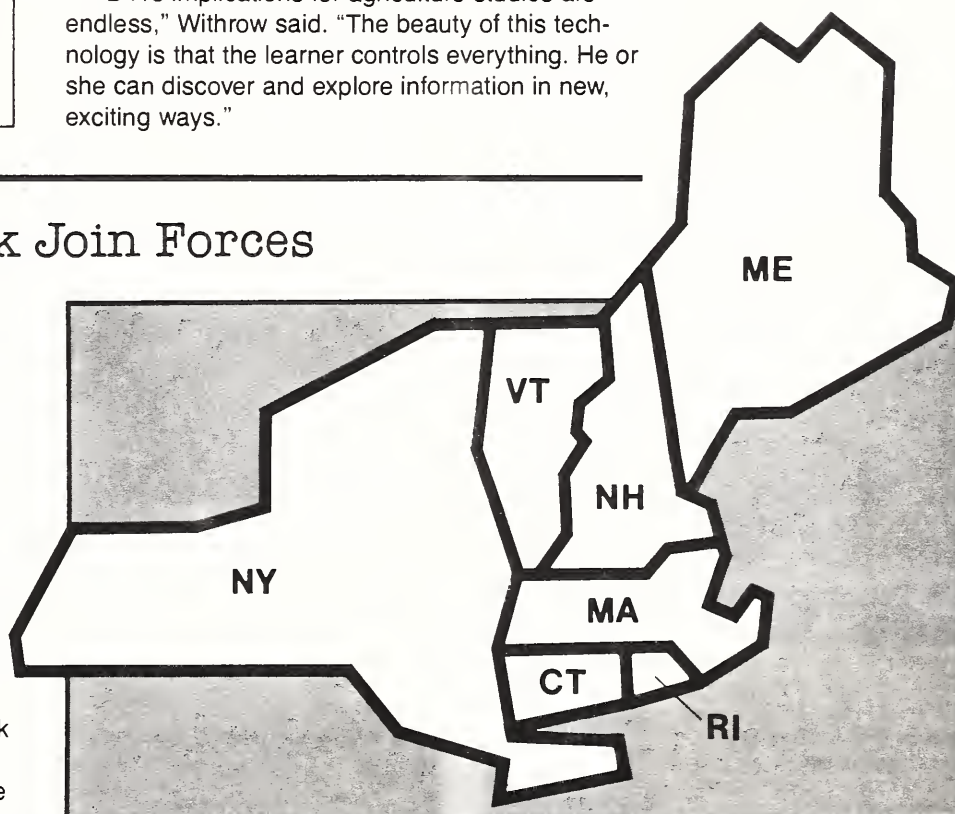
New England, New York Join Forces

The charter for the New England-New York Ag in the Classroom Consortium was ratified at the National Conference.

As stated in the charter, the purpose of the consortium is to "use the collective commitment and expertise of the state Ag in the Classroom organizations to enhance the understanding of agriculture among K-12th grade school students throughout the region, leading to a new generation of knowledgeable citizens who can make judicious decisions about agriculture."

Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and New Hampshire will now officially pool their creative resources and work collectively on projects from which they can all benefit. "New England and New York seem to have a built-in camaraderie, which is going to make the consortium work," said Dr. Gerald Fuller, University of Vermont, chairman of the Consortium's Board of Directors.

Each state in the consortium has a representative on the Board of Directors. The representatives' role is to seek funding for various state projects. The organization's first project is a regional agri-



culture commodities poster, which should be distributed within a year.

A summer program for teacher trainers may be on the agenda next summer. The consortium will also consider including teachers in the group's regional meetings, as well as publishing a semi-annual magazine.

The individuals listed here are key reference persons in each state. If you have any questions, want to make reports, or need more information about your state's Ag in the Classroom program, contact the following:

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